614 descent is in the male line from a common male ancestor or,
596 even more narrowly, to uterine brothers and sisters. The two terms, ton' and ba-denya, have a meaning which differs from that of our word "family," which is defined in our legal terminology as "the totality of persons united by ties of kinship or affinity."

592 The Bambara family lives in huts which are connected by an enclosure or completely surrounded by the enclosure when its two extremities are supported on a kind of vestibule (blon'). The enclosure is called gwa in some dialects, whence the name gwa-tigi, a term of respect for the fa, master of the house.

Gwa, therefore, means "family" only indirectly, and it is very difficult to reconcile this word with the word "family," since the gwa houses people who are not members of the family and, on the other hand, does not house all the members of the family.

Besides, it should be noted that the word gwa in its meaning of "enclosure" is used to designate all sorts of agglomerations likewise enclosed, notably livestock folds. The variants wore and gore, which are more specifically applied to these folds, may also be used, and actually are in some regions, in forming the names of settlements. The form kore or kori, common in expressions of courtesy, has the same meaning; kori ka kende? means literally, "Is all the house well?" [160]

In some Bambara dialects, the word so is used instead of gwa. The primary meaning of the word so is also "enclosure" and, more especially, "hedge of thorns," by which all primitive establishments are protected; so-tigi has the same meaning as gwa-tigi. The word so also means "household," i.e., the contents of a house, including all within it, whether on a permanent or temporary basis and whether or not belonging to the family.

It is common practice, however, to use so and gwa in the narrow sense of "people of the family," i.e., those living under the authority of the same fa.

592 It may be said, in short, that there is no exact term
601 for designating expressly and exclusively a collectivity
596

592 comparable to what our law defines as a family. In fact, the
601 four terms just discussed, ton', ba-denya, gwa, and so, are
596 all used for the purpose. It is what is intended by their use that gives them their meaning, and depending on the region, each term has a meaning made precise by usage.

592 The dwelling of the Bambara family usually includes
342 a fairly large number of huts of various kinds. Some are cylindrical and built of native masonry with a conical straw roof and, for a door, a slit or opening which does not extend all the way to the ground. Others are parallelepiped, made of native masonry, and ordinarily also provided with no opening except the door.

Shelters (gwa), consisting of flat straw roofs supported on forked sticks, are usually placed haphazardly or wherever the master of the house wants them and are certainly not governed by any traditional rules or fixed orientation. All these dwellings or out-buildings are enclosed by either a clay wall or an unbroken hedge whose two ends are supported by the walls
[343] of the hut called blon' which serves as a vestibule for the establishment.

[778] The altar of the ancestors and of the household gods is found in the blon'.

The houses of notables are somewhat more elaborately arranged: instead of a single inner court, there are two, three, or even more, sometimes graduated in extent. The master arranges his people in such a way as to divide into sections the heterogeneous elements gathered together under his protection.
592 The domestic servants and the young [161] men, the women, girls, and small children, and finally the eventual successor are, as it were, fenced apart in their own blocks of dwellings, while the fa himself is to be found in impressive isolation, which lends weight to his authority.

592 Among great personages, especially among heads of clans, this arrangement is the rule, and their isolation deep in
712 the interior is virtually a security measure. In the old days a kind of fortress or redoubt, the tata, was built in the center of the royal residence. Gunpowder, weapons, and all the means of defense were kept there, and it was no easy matter to capture

592 this well-built structure in the midst of the inextricable maze
[712] of surrounding huts which were themselves surrounded by a solid wall of native masonry.

[565] The people of a single household are classed in three categories: free men (woro-u), members of castes (nya-maka-la), and slaves (dyon'-u).

596 The freemen. Within the family, free persons are:
561 the men (tye-u), i.e., circumcised males; the moso-u, ex-
601 cised women; the den'-u, children of both sexes.

In accordance with their influence (faya) in the family, the men are called koro-u, old men, elders, or kamalen'-u, young masters. Among the old men the bina (uncles), brothers of the fa, hold the preponderant position; they form a kind of limited family council and generally work for the welfare of the community under the direction of the fa.

Among the women the following distinctions are made: the mothers, i.e., women under the control of a husband and who are actually mothers of children, ba-u; old women, moso-koro-u; grandmothers, mama-u; and finally unmarried girls, moso-de-u.

All children are called de unless they are specifically identified as de-n-ke, "boy," or de-moso or deni, "girl."

601 Furthermore, every male with any influence (faya) in the family, no matter to what extent, is called fa (1): [162]

1. In one way or another, therefore, every male is fa, since he exercises or will one day exercise faya. The word fa is jokingly applied even to very young boys just as ba is applied to little girls. These words may be used just like our familiar expressions when we say "Father X" or "Mother X" with no reference intended to any real state of fatherhood or motherhood.

In any case, the words fa and ba are also used as terms of respect, just as we

596 honored by the new fa, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

769 The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors. Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence, their souls are thought to live in the blon' of the dwelling. The blon' is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one [343 to the street and the other to the interior, usually the court-592] yard. It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going through the blon', where there is always a guard, at least in 778 important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and 769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts. Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side. On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
782 dead is called kara (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
778

1. In Soninké, kara means "to die" and "death."

on which libations are poured and to which are attached the remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (su-u). Nevertheless, it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and sacrifices before the door of the blon' and, more rarely, before the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and [775] the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors like to return to the place where the fa liked to sit during his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

588 Free union. This type of union rests on simple consent
583 by the two parties without any bride price.

In principle a woman who has ceased to belong to a husband belongs to her original community, and she can make no decisions concerning her future without its consent. If she ignores this, the community can always intervene to force her to break off any engagement she may have made, and to this end it may use any means of absolute control.

This suffices to explain why a man who agrees to a union of this kind usually finds himself in the most serious difficulties. Not only can his wife and children be taken from him without
[672] redress, but he can be sued for damages by the community to which the woman belongs.

It does sometimes happen, however, that certain women are released from the authority of their communities. These include women who are sole survivors of a community and, more commonly, those who have bought their freedom by dubious means. A free man who lives with such women achieves a union that to a great extent has the same effect as marriage. [206]

The Family

592 The household. The lawful household is based on mar-
583 riage. In order to grasp its essence, account must be taken of the interplay of two elements which are perfectly distinct but always closely involved in all human affairs: interest and sentiment. In a lawful household the essential interest is the bride price whose nature must be defined in order to understand its overwhelming importance.

583 Bride price is what is paid in exchange for a wife. It is understood that the status of the woman thus handed over does not change; if she was free before the event, she is still free after the payment of the bride price.

586 The marriage tie is such that it can always be broken by one or the other party; the one breaking the contract simply loses the bride price in the sense that if the husband initiated the rupture he cannot expect anything already paid to be returned. If the initiative was taken by the wife (or her community), then she must return what has been paid. Whatever the cause of rupture, however, the children always belong to the husband.

585 shouting songs that partly drown out the rolling of the drums and the roaring of the horns of the band. The boli gives a last roar, and its priest carries it to its foul temple where the air breathed is warmed by the steam of hot blood and never cooled. The huts open their doors, and a stream of women, children, and young girls rush along the alleys and mingle their voices with those that are arriving. The [535] crowd of women divides into several groups, and again they bend double in unimaginable contorsions that a pen cannot describe; all parts of their bodies shake and move, as in a gentle wave that goes forward and folds back on itself. They glide over the ground raising a cloud of dust and, preceded by drums and in a blast of guns, they arrive thus slowly in the couple's inner court. Here everybody flinds food ready. The middle of the court is full of huge gourds of to, or gruel, dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water, and jugs full of d'lo, or millet beer, and while the newlyweds are enjoying their first love-making, drinking, eating, dancing, and shouting is going on near them. For I forgot to say that the young bride will long since have left her frenzied, howling mob. As soon as the boli has been put away, the women come to lead her to her dwelling (1). Before

[595 ●592]

1. Every Bambara woman has her own hut separate from her husband's. A Bambara man who has only one wife sleeps in his wife's hut; if he has several, on the contrary, the woman who is summoned goes to lie in that of her husband. Some rich men provide each wife with a hut, an inner court, and a b'lon, or entry hut. In that case the first wife does not have a hut separate from that of her husband, and the husband goes to spend his nights with one or another as he chooses.

taking her into the marital sanctuary, where her husband is already